

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VALLETTA 2018 CULTURAL PROGRAMME

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Objectives

In September 2017, the Valletta 2018 Foundation launched its Cultural Programme which includes around 140 projects and 400 events to be organised throughout the year. This study aims to analyse the creation and development of the Cultural Programme and its individual projects.

The 2017 analysis builds on the research work carried out in the previous two years and looks into the strategies and practices in place to finalise this programme. The aim is to understand how the Valletta 2018 Foundation and its Cultural Programme operates by looking at three specific areas: (i) the cultural offer; (ii) audience participation (iii) the European dimension. The study looks at these elements from a production perspective and sets out to understand producer perspectives on these three elements.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used to reflect the multi-dimensional aspects of the Cultural Programme and the developments unfolding over five years. The research includes semi-structured interviews, focus groups and an online questionnaire.

In 2017, data was gathered primarily through in-depth interviews, focus groups as well as an online questionnaire sent to producers and project leads.

The interviews and focus group studies were carried out with:

1. Foundation Programming team members and management;
2. Creators, producers and strand coordinators of projects in the Cultural Programme;
3. Independent artists and groups participating in the programme.

Results

In the first year of study, the focus of the study was the analysis of the programme's vision as articulated in the published material and as experienced by the content programmers in the development phase. In 2016, the study observed the further consolidation of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. The interpretation of audience participation and engagement varied amongst different interviewees involved in projects ranging from grassroots community projects to the large scale events aimed at attracting large audiences. However, the study also indicated that interviewees shared a common vision of striving towards widening participation and with this a common concern and awareness that this requires ongoing efforts.

In 2017, the Cultural Programme was finalised and over 140 projects were included in the final programme, substantially widening the range and diversity of the programme. Throughout this year, the study observed how the Cultural Programme was finalised to include a wide range of projects some of which had been developed in previous years and other projects joining the list at a much later stage. Much of the work in 2017 involved securing contractual agreements and participation of international artists, showing a continued intensified drive towards international links and a wider cultural offer.

As was clear in previous years, the interpretation of audience participation and engagement varies amongst different interviewees involved in projects ranging from smaller community projects to the large scale events aimed at attracting large audiences.

Way forward

In 2018, with the full implementation of the Cultural Programme, the main focus will be the onsite evaluation through project visits. At present, a project visit schedule is being drawn up so that different assistant researchers will be assigned to the individual performances. For each visit a data sheet will be inputted to a central system so that the information on each project visit is compiled.

Focus groups will be organised in the second quarter of 2018 with the Foundation's programming team, strand coordinators and producers. In-depth interviews will be organised with foreign producers who will not be able to attend focus groups. An online questionnaire will be sent to all producers soon as their performance is finalised so that data is collected throughout 2018.

Regular meetings with the Programme Coordinator and other team members will be organised to ensure regular updates.